The Indian Stage

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OUR LOOKOUT

The Shakespeare Anniversary

One of the associations which throw a halo of glory round the month of April, is that it is, as the late Mr. Swinburne said, 'the month of Shakespeare.' It was only natural that the eminent artist in words should have gone into raptures over the world's Master of Song. But the eulogy implied in the remark comes with a special force to the minds of those interested in the Stage and the Drama. Were it possible to take a plebiscite among the stage-lovers of the world as to the name of the dramatist enjoying the most extensive homage, there need be no doubt in thinking that the unique honour, will by universal consent be assigned to the 'myriad-minded Shakespeare.'

We need hardly point out that amidst the various rejoicings on the occasion of the anniversary of the world's greatest master of the dramatic art—the 23rd instant—thoughts of love and reverence will rise to his memory from a large number of admirers in India, where his influence has been gradually extending during the last one century. One of the most encouraging signs in the present evolution of the Indian Drama is the ever-increasing recognition that is being shown to the principles associated with his Art. Shakespeare's work has a number of lessons to impart, to Indian dramatic literature in particular, though the latter can boast of greater antiquity and philosophic depth. His universality which has formed the uniform subject of praise in him, by all critics from Ben Jonson to Matthew Arnold must find a close appreciation in this country. The Indian dramatist must learn the secret of a soul which could extend its sympathies to such a wide range of human life as is represented by the gloomy Hamlet, the boisterous Falstaff, the heavenly Miranda, the wily Cleopatra, the suffering Imogen, the braggart Pistol and the merry Touchstone. He need no longer fight shy of Tragedy but strive with Shakespeare, 'to unlock the gates of horror and thrilling fears' and

> Ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

The sordid, painful and miserable aspects of humanity need not be banished from the realms of Art as too low or too loathsome. The treatment of the world of Iago and Caliban, Lear and Macbeth implies a strength and power which seems to be the most lamentable want of the Indian Drama. The cynicism of Jacques and the brutality of Richard III are elements of life which no artist professing to 'hold the mirror up to Nature,' can afford to ignore. In mere dramatic *technique* and in the essential qualities which contribute to the highest excellence in stage-presentation, it is difficult to

conceive of a better training than a course of study in the masterpieces of Shakespeare. Let India therefore make itself heard in the pœan of praise that will be offered all over the world this month, on the occasion of the anniversary of one of whom it could be said.

Thy lips impant
The noblest comment on the human heart :
And as fair Eve, in Eden newly placed
Gazed on her form in limpid waters traced,
And stretched her gentle arms, with pleased surprise,
So nature, on thy magic page surveys,
Her sportive graces and untutored ways !
Wondering the soft reflection doth she see,
Then laughing owns she loves herself in thee!

THE CASE OF TOLSTOY AGAINST SHAKESPEARE—I.*

This is by far the most celebrated case to be found in the registers of time. No other case which has ever come up before a human tribunal has set up claims which a practical consensus of opinion in the entire civilised world would be prone to characterise as preposterous or sought to re-agitate questions believed to have been set at rest by the verdict of centuries and the highest courts of critical judgment. One cannot therefore but admire the courage and intellectual hardihood of the Russian speculator in launching on such a litigation at his advanced age. My first impulse was to accept the brief on behalf of the defendant for it falls to the lot of few lawyers to be engaged in such a great cause, much less to be allowed to choose the side. The temptation however was at the same time strong to plead for the plaintiff and earn professional celebrity by winning what at first sight seemed a forlorn claim. But neither was to be. It struck me that here was a rare opportunity offered to me of not merely advocating whichever side I should chose but also of playing the role of a Judge if I should feel disposed and I determined to do so, as I am not likely to have another chance. Under different circumstances I should perhaps in this presence have hesitated to usurp such powers and run the risk of being reported for contempt of court but I am assured by *Max in the Capital* that I might do so with impunity. I therefore approach the performance of this self-appointed Judicial duty without any trepidation or misgiving. And in the discharge of such an office I feel further supported by a lively sense of the futility of any appeal from my Judgment, because apart from the fate of all appeals generally I have in this instance the collateral assurance arising from the presence of my learned friend in the chair who and whose clever clerks have extensive powers of returning and rejecting and summarily disposing of appeals under various sections known to them.

Count Leo Tolstoy the plaintiff is now well known to the civilised world. A Russian nobleman of large means he was till about twenty years back known to Europe chiefly, if not solely, as a Novelist. His works received a measure of recognition and were admitted by competent critics to be possessed of considerable power and even beauty. Since then he has

* A paper read last year before the Literary Society of Pachiyappa's College, by Mr. V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, High Court Vakil, when Mr. Arthur Davies, Deputy Registrar, High Court, Madras, presided. Count Tolstoy had not then passed away. A melancholy interests therefore attaches to the publication of this paper in this month consecrated to the memory of Shakespeare.—Ed.

abandoned the field of fiction for the sphere of speculation.

He has contributed to thought on nearly every subject of higher interest to man. He has written largely on Theology and religion. He has given to the world sketches of his own belief and of his views on life. He has claimed to solve many difficult problems in Sociology, Politics and Ethics. He has preached to nations on peace and war. He has also formulated a new philosophy and science of æsthetics. And about two years ago he published to the civilised world his views on Shakespeare as a Dramatist.

It must also be noticed that the Count, not content with preaching and teaching has been in his own life for several years past been setting to the world the high example of sublime simplicity and poverty. To-day he is a prophet, and partisans of his creed are to be found in almost every civilised country in the world. And even by those who are unable to agree with his original views on most matters, he is respected as a man of unquestionable greatness and high and sincere moral purpose. When such a man speaks even though on the threadbare subject of Shakespeare and the drama, the thinking world feels bound to turn and listen. Listen all the more attentively the world has to, when what is spoken is deliberately stated to be in direct opposition to the opinion established in the whole European world. So much as regards the plaintiff. Now for the defendant. Of this man called Shakespeare it must be conceded at once that beyond his name very little can be stated to be indisputably certain. I am not aware that his very existence has ever been denied or that his having been an Englishman has ever been questioned. It seems also to be admitted that he had some connection with the stage. But beyond this, nearly almost everything that can be stated of a man has been doubted. What may be called the important events in his life have been disputed. His authorship of even single lines has formed the subject of learned controversy. Volumes have been written to demonstrate that the real author of the plays that now pass under the name of Shakespeare was some other person. Every degree of blame and praise has been accorded to him. He has been worshipped by nations as the greatest genius the world has produced. He has been stigmatised as a plagiarist and a jackdaw in borrowed feathers. Honoured names in every land have referred to his work as reaching the high-water mark of literary art in all ages, while others have not been wanting in whose critical estimate he was merely a clever coiner of phrases and no more. I have paused to consider, whether any other man in the world has occasioned such a flood of criticism contemporary and posthumous, ceaseless in flow down to the present date nearly three centuries after his death. One is in the face of such testimony almost tickled to exclaim that this defendant is a person of very dubious antecedents.

But we have here fortunately nothing to do with antecedents. The case has to be decided on its merits. The plaintiff has by his very pleading put it beyond the power of the defence to rely upon authorities of precedents or even previous judgments in the same matter. In fact the whole action is framed for the special purpose of the very authorities and precedents being over-ruled and the Judgments being set aside. In technical language they would call it the very cause

of action. It will therefore not do to call in support of the defence what is clearly averred and admitted and sought to be avoided. Further in the Court of literary criticism no precedent or authority is legally recognisable and none may be referred to a happy state of things for advocates and Judges. There are further in vogue in the practice of that Court forms of pleading by which may be altogether suspended the common courtesy by which references to authority and precedent are allowed sometimes and in some matters. In such cases the decision has to be only on what are termed fundamental principles. It is therefore not open to us to dispose of the matter on the short preliminary ground of previous adjudication. I should no doubt be happy to take advantage of any other technical ground of decision but I am at a loss to find any. No doubt the person of the defendant was dead long ago and he has not left even a successor but the immortality of his name seems to be a fatal objection to any such course being adopted. Further it is his works that are in question and they live with daily growing splendour and beauty as a suggestive Tamil expression says. We are thus driven to the necessity of examining the grounds of the action and of deciding not on authority or precedent but on principles which may be accredited to be fundamental.

In the essay under consideration Tolstoy begins by telling us that the opinion now published to the worldh as been long established in his mind; that the first time he read Shakespeare he experienced the same feelings of repulsion, weariness and bewilderment as ever afterwards; that in view of the contrary opinion cherished by all men of the Christian world he first doubted whether his peculiar experience was due to any special defect in his own mind.; that he accordingly tried for fifty years to bring his own views into harmony with those of the rest of the civilised world; that even just before making this pronouncement and after his seventy-fifth year he read the whole ofShakespeare with a view to test himself and that in spite of all this he has been forced to the indubitable conviction that Shakespeare is not a great genius, that in his works do not exist the merits its readers and spectators discover, that this process of discovery distorts their æsthetic and ethical understanding, that Shakespeare cannot be recognised even as an average author and that Shakespeare's fame is false and unfounded and as such a great evil.

One cannot possibly doubt the sincerity of this opinion. It is a perfectly honest statement. Now let us for a moment consider the mere fact of the publication of such views by Tolstoy at his age and the struggles, we may be sure, he passed through before venturing and rushing to hurl like a thunderbolt such a conclusion on the civilised world. It is moral courage of the highest order of which we cannot have too much at least in some few persons in every generation and country. It is monumental and exemplary. He has not done so in ignorance. He knows, he says, that the majority of people believe so firmly in the greatness of Shakespeare that in reading his judgment they would not even admit the possibility of its justice. Millions of others in his place would have strangled their own experiences, killed their own convictions and adopted those of the fashionable world. I know it is possible to suggest that such opinions might have been ventilated out of sheer vanity, from an arrogant feeling of non-

conformity and with a view to gain notoriety. But in the case of a man like Tolstoy the very suggestion is its own refutation. In a world where deeds, words, and even thoughts are so completely under the sway of custom and fashion it is refreshing to read such opinions. They act like a tonic on us. It is when we are children that we judge away like that, harsh and true always in superlatives and without any fear or favour or sense of so-called shame. I almost wish I could bring myself to agree with Tolstoy in his view of Shakespeare if only to be able to imbibe a little of such freedom of judgment and fearlessness of opinion. But we shall proceed. After intimating to us his conclusion in brief and how he struggled against it and arrived again at it, Tolstoy proceeds to quote Johnson, Hazlitt, Hallam, Sheley, Swinburne, Victor, Hugo and Brandes, on King Lear being the greatest of Shakespearean dramas and taking that drama for illustration to prove that it is not the acme of perfection it is represented to be by critics but that it is something *quite* different. It is not possible in the short time before me to follow Tolstoy in his description detail after detail of the contents of the drama and his criticism thereon and examine them one by one. I must therefore content myself with dealing with a few of them in detail and with the rest generally.

(*To be continued*).

TO SHAKESPEARE.

Through distant ages rings his mighty song :
The master's voice resounds sublime and bold
In sweeter, fresher accents—never old
By time, to all the world's enraptured throng.
From ancient Eastern lands we speed along
To sport with nature mirrored in his art,
And feel the pulsings of the human heart—
Behold Love's glow, Grief's tears and conquered Wrong ;

With reverent awe, gaze at the mystic brow,
Applaud the mighty mind that could create
In living form and spirit the human race—
Unveil with vivid touch its baffling ways.
Let myriad tongues acclaim him wise and great,
And grant the lord Apollo's laurel bough.

IAGO—WHAT WAS HIS MOTIVE ?

(BY MR. V. VENCATACHARI)

The question has often been asked if Iago had any motive in wrecking the reputation of the innocent Desdemona and in working out her ruin. Some of the greatest Shakespearean scholars have thought that his was a (motiveless malignity) and that now and then he only concocted motives to justify his heinous crimes. To us Orientals, it may be a little hard to conceive a crime without a tangible motive. Human nature demands some marked provocation, whether immediate or remote, for the doing of an act of manifest injustice. It is at the same time impossible to take the point for granted that Shakespeare created a character of the stamp of Iago with superabundant touches almost all of which take their cue from this particular personage, without at the same time endowing him with any the slightest spark of human wit or wisdom. It is indeed hard to believe that from the very inception of his birth till his end Iago did not trouble himself with gains and losses, never weighed the consequences of his own acts, never besought the means for his own self-aggrandisement at the expense of others—in fine that he was a character, non-human and utterly purposeless; and yet the whole play depends upon his own machinations. When the villain, an utter stranger to the old senator Brabantio, heaps abuse after abuse upon the latter when he is aroused from his slumber, the motive of Iago is often ignored and this incident is taken as proof of his inherent proneness for abominable mischief without any motive. A little thought will show that Iago had a motive in thus addressing the senator. It is a matter of common knowledge that a man is made to act sooner by alarming and threatening words, nay by abusive ones, than by words of exceeding civility. Worried now and then by the importunities of Roderigo and unwilling to return to him the valuables he has received from him as a bribe for effecting matrimonial connection with the fair Desdemona, Iago wanted, if possible, to thwart the impending marriage of Othello with her. This he could not do otherwise than by hastening the old man to the proposed place to marriage and thus prevent it altogether. It was dead of night when the attempt of Iago was tried. In the circumstances Iago did what every man of his stamp would have done and the words used by him, most uncivil and insulting as they were, were quite opposite to the purpose in view. He failed in this, his first attempt to justify the retention of the bribe he had received. Poor Roderigo, was on the verge of losing hope. He spoke out of the intense against of his heart when he exclaimed.

"It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician."

By superhuman skill begotten of unspeakable villainy, Iago tries to adjust himself before Roderigo by still holding out hopes for him.

"I have professed me thy friend and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; *I could never better stead thee than now.*"

All these he says with a set purpose, *viz.*, to hold out hopes for his friend and thus to postpone the day when he shall be bound to make restitution of the valuables he had made his own.

It is true that the alleged supersession of his claims by Othello and a consequent

aversion towards his general are all lies but then these lies are concocted with a motive, namely to brighten the hopes in Roderigo; of eventually winning the hand of Desdemona. Without such hopes being kept alive, Iago thought there was very little chance of making himself the richer by the tempting presents which he kept for himself. When the chances are all against Roderigo gratifying his incurable lust, he cries out, as a man in the circumstances could not but do

"I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would have half-corrupted a votarist, you have told me she hath received them * * *."

It need Laxdly be remarked by the way; that Iago uttered a lie when he told Roderigo that the jewels had been delivered to Desdemona. He pocketed them and throughout the play he did his best not to part with them for ever. Iago had no more assuring reply to give but he evasively answers by saying "Well; Go to; very well." Roderigo is still persistent and would not let Iago alone. The latter then decides to put an end to Roderigo and he conceives a plan which, as we know proves successful. Iago is jubilant over his projected plan. He is sure Roderigo may not live. Says Iago,

"I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now whether he kill Cassio.
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain; Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large,
Of gold and jewels that I robb'd from him.
As gifts to Desdemona; It must not be."

The above quotation unquestionably reveals the real motive which has caused so much havoc. In his vicious attempt to prevent restitution Iago was perforce obliged to work out a plan for the early dissolution of the marriage between Othello and Desdemona. It may be that he did not anticipate so dreadful a result. His chief aim must have been to create suspicion in the mind of the Moor of sufficient force to bring about the rejection of Desdemona.

By the various tricks and chicanery employed by him, Iago was able to keep his friend Roderigo in good humour until it was no longer possible to resist his anger when foul play upon his life was resorted to. It will thus be seen that an indestructible avarice for wealth and gain induced Iago to bring to ruin persons who never gave him any offence or with whom he himself had no reason to quarrel. That such a motive is sufficient to hurt even innocent third parties like Othello of whom the villain says,

"He holds me well; the better shall my purpose work on him" needs no lengthy demonstration. The work of Iago was not out of mere sport but it was in consideration of profit, for he himself says.

"Thus do I ever make my fool my purpose."

There was a little theatre in London which for a time became the home of the amateur. It was known as Miss Kelly's and is now the Royalty * * *. To those who had "gone mad on acting", it afforded an excellent refuge. At one time it was run on a sort of tariff principle. The manager announced a play with a long cast. You should chose any character you pleased—at a price * * * *. The Jumble was extremely funny. "Hamlet" was probably played by a man of means, who had been better cast for the Apothecary in "*Rameo and Juliet*". Ophelia scaled 12 stone at least; the "Ghost" was Pepperis on the stray. But it was good fun and as the actors took out their money in tickets there were full houses. But the venture had a brief career, and the house was closed, but soon re-opened as the Royalty.

TO A COMPANY OF YOUNG FRIENDS WHO STAGED

The Merchant of Venice.

A good old tale of Venice drew us near,
And friendship's golden clasps have closely bound
Our hearts. While lit-up on the stage we found
The sullen cry of anguish, sorrow's dismal tear,
The heavy hand of despair's chilling fear—
All speeding vanish at the magic sound
Of Love, the charmer lulling souls around
To sweet repose ; saw hungry greed though near

Its prey, repulsed and beaten sore ; and loving souls
Break all the bounds of rigid man ; we knew,
Our comrades—cheering faces hailed our sight :
This friendship be our guide, through rocks and shoals
Of life, and bring us blessings ever new,
This love transmuting all to Joy and Light.

THE SOCIAL DRAMAS OF IBSEN—III.

(BY MR. GEORGE JOSEPH, M.A., BAR.-AT-LAW).

The " Wild Duck " is a drama of low life and but for the presence of Hedvig the dear child whose original was Ibsen's own sister of the same name, it would have been a singularly sordid affair. Hjalmar is the embodiment of vulgarity. He is a photographer who thinks he is a sensitive high-souled son whose business in life is to clear the family name of the blot that had been brought on it by his disreputable jail bird of a drunken father. The old man had been to prison for the crime of the wealthy old merchant Werle who is now giving him starvation maintenance as a solatium. He has got a garret which he has sanctified into a sort of toy—forest full of Christmas trees and rabbits and pigeons. Here he goes shooting rabbits and pigeons in memory of the old days ; but he always spares a wild duck which is the favourite of the child Hedvig. Hjalmar is looking forward to an invention of his which was to make them all rich some day. Gina his wife has been often described as a coarse, vulgar, commonplace woman, but I have a sneaking partiality for her. She is another of Ibsen's great heroines. She is a self-sacrificing, hardworking, great soul whose lot had been thrown in sordid surroundings. She is neither gentle, nor cultured but then a woman who has to keep a whole family going regardless of ingratitude, inappreciation and the slights of husband and lodgers has few opportunities for culture and will be trodden upon if she were gentle. Hjalmar meets Gregers Werle, the son of the merchant

Werle at the latter's house. This Gregers Werle is an out and out Ibsenist. He is always lifting high the banner of the ideal and speaking the truth in season and out of it. He learns that Gina is a cast off mistress of his father and had been married to the unsuspecting Hjalmar. Now Gregers' peculiar spot is touched and he breaks off with his father for this lie played upon an innocent person. He goes out seeking for lodgings and hears that Gina takes in lodgers. He becomes a lodger ; but the trouble begins with his peculiar practice of speaking the truth. He needs must tell Hjalmar that Gina was once a servant in his house and was seduced by his father. Hedvig too is found to be no daughter of Hjalmar's at all. Hjalmar blusters in weak, conventional fashion about the injured rights of a husband and goes, banging out after cruelly disowning Hedvig. Gregers is perplexed to see Hjalmar and Gina take the matter in that light. He was putting before them the foundations of a true and real marriage instead of one founded on lies and misunderstanding. Of course this sort of thing will not work actual life. Now Hedvig is distressed because Hjalmar refuses to see or caress her—she does not know what to do and seeks Gregers' help. He puts the terrible suggestion into her head that Hjalmar may still be persuaded to love her as before if she would kill that wild duck of hers to show her love for him. Hjalmar comes back next morning after a night's dissipation and resumes his quiet life. But the tragedy was working in Hedvig's young soul and by some perversion of logical sequence she shoots with her pistol not the wild duck but herself.

Now the last two plays leave a heap of problems to face. What did Ibsen mean by them ? Is he simply a deliberate destroyer or does his ideal fail in working out ? Or is there a conscious ideal at all ? In any case I believe that Stockmann and Gregers Werle both belong to the same intellectual category. Both are anarchists ; both hold high, a very noble idea both get into trouble ; both bring trouble on others whom they would help. Both are too individualistic and too turbulent to fit conveniently in with the commonplaces of compromise on which ordinary mortal humanity subsists. Now there are two ways of looking at a problem like that. There is a final *reductio ad absurdum* in it but what it is, that is reduced to absurdity admits of two possible answers. The individual is condemned and crushed that is one view—or Society is condemned and found wanting in the light of a sterner and more austere ideal. Who is right ? and here as it seems to me, we stumble right into the centre of Ibsen's problem—the problem he had in common with Neitzche, Tolstoi and Carlyle. Stockmann is crushed no doubt for the moment but Society has a heavy reckoning to pay for crushing a spirit like Stockmann's.

The same problem is repeated and dealt with from a slightly different point of view in "Rosmersholm." Here it is Rebecca West that is the single, strong soul that is crushed. The scene is a country Parsonage. Rosmer is a man of the old type and will end with the veneer of new ideals. He is married to a sickly wife who is still of the past with its traditions and prejudices and limitations. She has taken a warm fancy to and entertained in her own home an orphan girl who had fashioned her soul for herself, free from all the clinging burden of the past under which Rosmer's wife

laboured. The orphan is Rebecca. She is an intense individual with ambitious imaginings and nebulous longings so characteristic of emancipated womanhood. She is an ardent radical and believer in freedom. Rebecca falls passionately in love with Rosmer and Rosmer also gradually falls under her spell. The wife sees how matters stand and for her love of Rosmer goes and drowns herself in the mill stream so that Rebecca and Rosmer may be happy without scandal. The play begins a year after the tragedy. Kroll the Schoolmaster, a rabid conservative suspects Rosmer of radical leanings. Of course it was all the radicalism of Rebecca who had shaped Rosmer as dough in her hands. There is a warm scene between the two and they part. Kroll subsequently returns to the charge and in the hot discussion which followed accuses him of having been the cause of his wife's death. Rosmer is horrified and Rebecca comes out from behind the curtains where she was hiding, listening to the conversation and takes the guilt of Mrs. Rosmer's death on herself. She confesses she did it out of ambition. Kroll goes away. In the next Act Rosmer returns to the subject and finds out she is really in love with him. He offers his hand to Rebecca but she refuses it because of the past and makes preparations for leaving the house. Then the tragedy commences. The old male's selfishness and brutality of possession asserts itself in Rosmer and he challenges her to prove her love for him in the same way that his wife did – that is by jumping into the mill stream. She quietly replies "You shall have your faith." Then the infection of her will catches him and he decides to jump into the stream with her. And so the tragedy of two souls comes about. I would much rather that Rebecca had gone to her death alone. Rosmer's was too weak a soul and too paltry and one to deserve the grand end he had. But after all Rebecca loved him and that in my eyes rescues Rosmer from absolule failure.

The six remaining ton plays of Ibsen do come within the category of social dramas at all except perhaps "The Lady from the Sea" where a woman's right to her individuality is once more asserted-but there is little in it to add to what had been said in "A Doll's House" and Rosmersholm" "Little Eyolf" deals with the problem of children in married life. It opens interesting fields of speculation but I must resist the temptation. "Hedda Gabler" is a great drama but it is the study of a peculiar woman's soul-almost pathological in its peculiarities. "The Master builder" and "John Gabriel Borkman" are also studies of individual souls and of no special social or general interest. "When We Dead Awaken" published in 1899 in Ibsen's seventy-first year and seven years before his death is the production of a very old man whose work was already done.

Now I am in sight of port. It is difficult to summarise Ibsen in a few words. His active literary career since the days of his satires and caricatures in far away Grimstead as an apothecary's apprentice has been the occasion of controversies lasting over sixty years. It would be idle to sum up either his work or significance in easyhearted fashion. He has faced us with problems which it would be the work of a century to solve. He was deeply concerned about only two problems—the problem of the strong man and the proplem of the individual woman. He himself recognised and formulated

them long ago. Society has crushed the strong man and denied a soul to the woman. He has not solved either of them but he has cleared the field of a mass of superstitions and prejudices. As I said before it will be the work of the century to work out these questions and it is fatuous to accuse him of having left us no constructive theory. It was not his business to do so---he was an artist first and only secondarily a philosopher. As far as I am concerned two words may be thrown out to contribute towards an ultimate view of Ibsen. The first word is this:—He was a radical in Art. It is foolish to say he was a realist. Realism is only a word—it is impossible as an ideal either in life or literature. Reality as a whole is too huge and unnecessary an affair for any one to concern himself seriously about. You must discriminate and reject and choose before any view of life or its suffering is possible for the purposes of art. But Ibsen did a unique thing. He dealt with real but unconventional aspects of existence. People said that his subjects were not suited to artistic treatment. The answer is twofold. Ibsen's treatment is artistic and that goes to the root of the objection. Secondly Goethe's deep saying is always true. "No real circumstance is unpoetic as long as the poet knows how to use it." But the process of getting use to real flesh and blood and humanness on the stage constituted a severe discipline against which we rebel.

My second word about Ibsen is this:—

He was a critic in philosophy. You have to recognise Ibsen's limitations. There is no use seeking for a constructive philosophy in Ibsen and getting angry with him because you don't find one. For after all it has to be remembered that it was the age which was on its trial before Ibsen and not Ibsen before the age. He was a critic and the effectiveness of his criticism is testified to by the controversies of the last fifty years. Even criticism for criticism's sake won't be a bad substitute for the unmeaning words, art for art's sake. We shall after all be the more sound in our construction because Ibsen has criticised so effectively.

CORRESPONDENCE

PARIJATA APAHARANAM.

The Hon. Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Iyer, B.A. B.L., writes to us :

DEAR SIRS,

I had the misfortune to witness the performance of a scene from *Parijata Apaharanam* on the occasion of the entertainment given by the Raja of Ettiyapuram. The acting was not bad and the very youthful Narada sang very well. But all lovers of India must protest against exhibiting on the stage such a travesty of a most moral incident related in the Puranas. The story is intended to convey to the lay-mind the teaching that Lord Sri Krishna expects absolute self-abandonment in his devotees. Sri Rukhmani is the gentlest, purest and sweetest of women. Her love is one of absolute surrender of herself to her Lord. Her joy is that she loves so intensely. Sathyabhama, loves Sri Krishna no less ardently, no less absolutely. But her pleasure consists chiefly in knowing that that love is reciprocated. She thinks that she loves best and believes that none else is so devoted. Rukhmani has no room in her heart for jealousy, because she is all love. Sri Krishna wants to teach Sathyabhama a lesson. He wants to humble the proud love of one and to exalt the selfless attachment of the other.

Narada's services are requisitioned by the Lord to enable him to teach the lesson. Narada is the instrument of the Lord and not the instigator of the quarrel. This is the story as it has been handed down to us. I have no quarrel with those who think that all this is absurd. But I protest against this object-lesson being misapplied as it was done on the occasion I refer to—Rukhmani and Sathyabhama bandying words with each other, with poor Krishna in the middle helpless to control or counsel. The Lord of the Universe was exhibited to an amused audience as the pitiable henpecked husband of two ungovernable viragos. The finest creation of the poetic imagination, the serene, uncomplaining, and self contented Rukhmani was depicted as coming out second best in her exchange of Billings gate with her rival. The proud queen self-conscious of the unbounded love she bears to her Lord was put on the stage as if she were fresh from a night brawl.

Every lover of India ought to protest against this scandalous representation of a religious drama. I cannot imagine anything more derogatory to Hinduism than the perpetrations of this outrage on one of our most sacred possessions. I should challenge the author to draw my attention to the source from which he drew his inspiration for this delineation of the three characters. I have said enough. I hope the play will no longer be put on the stage.

I know the adaptation of this same story which the Suguna Vilasa Sabha stages is free from most of the defects which I have drawn attention to. But I must not omit to mention that even in your Sabha the true inwardness of the incident is not brought out. Sri Krishna is made the instrument to effect Narada's purpose, instead of its being the other way. I admire the excellant acting. Mr. Krishnaswamy Aiyar's superb presentation of Sathyabhama is very good. But the Lord is subordinated to the whims of others, instead of his subordinating everything to his superior purpose of enlightening the world. My idea is that we should not stage these divine plays. Their exposition must be left to Bagavatars. I know that most of them are incapable of doing justice to the vocation which they have adopted as a means of livelihood. However that may be, if a constant attender at your performances might offer a suggestion, I would request our Sabha not to put on the stage any of our avatars.

This letter has already become long, otherwise I should like to say a few words upon the acting of English tragedies like Hamlet. Even in England, tragedies are seldom staged. I may recur to this subject sometime hence.

To laugh naturally on the stage is difficult. I remember the melodious laugh of Mrs. Nisbett as "Lady Gay Spanker", almost equalled by that of Mrs. Bernard Beere—how delightfully natural, how different to the mere each in nation of to-day! Well, my rule guided me—I practised. I laughed consumedly. I was driven out of my house. I was living in the country then; the servants were giving notice—Master was mad! I took refuge on the hills. I laughed at my case. The shepherds disregarded me—they thought me harmless. One day I heard an echo. On the other side of the hedge I saw a man—Charles, a London entertainer—who had also gone there to laugh—a coincidence. On the night when the crucial moment arrived, I made my exit in a wild burst, and remember nothing until I found Mrs. Silk Buckingham shaking me vigorously. I was laughing hysterically, but could hear the clapping of hands. "Be quite, you fool!" she said; "*go on and take your call*".

OUR CRITIC

Could We But See and *Sunset*: By the Madras Dramatic Society, 7th and 8th March, 1911.

The Madras Dramatic Society must be congratulated on the interesting performance with which they closed a very successful season. The selection of the pieces was particularly happy, A Demain Grange's *Could We But See* and Jerome K. Jerome's *Sunset* affording striking situations for dramatic presentation and being eminently instructive. Though both of them have a happy ending, they quiver with emotions of tragic strength and raise enough of the 'pity and tears' demanded by Aristotle.

Could We But See is the story of a dissipated young knight, spending his days in riotous scenes of vice to the neglect of his wife and family obligation reforming himself at the end by the wholesomes, advice of his own 'shadow.' Sir Richard Tressingham is midst his boon companions and his wife tries in vain to withdraw him from his world of revelry. There is a struggle in Evelyn's soul, between her duty as a wife and the temptation offered by Lord Cresswell. Penitence however comes over the husband, by the exhortation of his shadow, who narrates the probable future career of the unhappy man in the guise of his own experiences. Sir Richard wakes up to a realisation of the fatality to which de is drifting and the roses brought by the servant for his wife's birthday the next morning constitute another impulse towards reformation. The couple are brought to the ways of Love and Happiness, after three years of misery in married life.

Sir Richard Tressingham was ably personated by Mr. F. Leslie Coles, the Honorary Secretary of the Society, who delineated with vividness the luxurious langour and moral callousness of the erring husband, though it must be pointed out that the scene of repentance was not sufficiently touching. Mr. R. S. F. Simson was successful as the shadow, his voice lending him a weird impressiveness so necessary for the character. The most effective piece of acting was however that of the heroine, Miss Eva Sinclair who portrayed admirably the 'close-lipped' suffering of the injured wife, and delineated every emotional struggle by her facial expression. We warmly congratulate Miss Sinclair on her splendid success and desire to mark out for special appreciation her acting at the turning point in the reconciliation.

Sunset turns on the love of two half-sisters, Lois and Joan, for the same person Lawrence, the former bearing heroically the anguish caused by the lover being wedded finally to Joan. It is a story of sacrifice—sacrifice in the highest region of human feelings; it is *Sunset* to the hopes and aspirations of a maiden in the full bloom of life. Lois and Joan were represented by Miss Eva Sinclair and Miss Eileen Decoque respectively who formed quite an attractive pair in the opening scenes of humorous raillery and thoughtless playfulness. Miss Decoque brought to her task commendable quickness and sensitiveness of feeling and Miss Sinclair who had the more difficult part to play, came out with even greater success than in the previous part. The audience could feel all the suffering of the soal surging up in her when she strives to say to her sister: 'God grant he may prove true and loyal to you'. Mr. Coles had no interesting situations to represent as the lover Lawrence, and we are not disposed to blame him if he was

somewhat tame and indifferent. A refreshing vien of variety was introduced by Mr. H. G. Ogden, who as the bucolic Azariah Stodd had his own 'agricultural way' of putting things. Miss Molly Moore entered this world of Love and Suffering as Aunt Drusilla with praises for '*her days*' and sarcastic criticisms of the new order of things among the younger generation. Cynicism and vanity, were represented with keen impressiveness. Loi's father, Mr. A. R. Birch displayed one or two fine touches in his acting.

Though the two pieces lasted together for only an hour, the performance was intense enough to leave a profound impression on the audience. The serious central idea of the plays was aided powerfully by the striking scenic arrangements, for which Mr. H. G. Ogden, the Stage-Manager was responsible.

OUR BOUQUET

EASTERN AND WESTERN ART.

In the February number of the *East and West*, Mr. Everard G. Gilbert Cooper says:

The underlying motive of Oriental art-work, I can at least, partly appreciate. There is in it a complete antithesis to the conception prevailing in Europe to-day. The western ideals were dictated to them by the Greeks. They represent the glorification of the human form, the apothosis of anthropomorphism. Art in Europe cannot free itself from that conception. In every work, at every time and place we find it, hidden indeed under many disguises, but essentially, and at all times, intensely human. The same idea pervades even in religion. Ask the ordinary man or woman in Europe what conception of the Infinite Being, or Divine First Cause or Creator (call it what name you will) he or she has formed, and you will certainly receive, if you succeed at all, an answer in which the anthropomorphic idea largely predominates. The East alone exemplifies a different conception of art and religion. There the chief characteristic seems to be to get away as far as possible from anthropomorphism. The carved figures of gods and goddesses resemble very slightly the human form, and to those who are brought up in Occidental canons of art, they appear frequently grotesque and horrible. The images of Buddha, distorted and squat, are mere travesties, and are considered by many to have been wrought so as to strike terror into the heart. To those, however, who see aright, there is nothing terrible in these aspects. One cannot fail to note, if sympathy be invoked, the sublime look of perfect peace and serenity which is their chief feature. Tranquillity amid all the strife and discord of humanity as it pursues the path of life, is the dominant chord of all Eastern art. And, naturally, it is also the eternal theme of their philosophy. Life is a necessary evil in the progress of the soul towards Nirvana, and it behoves every man to attune his thoughts and actions, in order that, although bound to "Karma", the wheel of life, his eyes pierce through the future, cloud-hidden yet not uncertain. As a Japanese poet writes : "I want no pleasure, love, beauty or success, only the mighty Nothing in No More."

THE DRAMA—AND SHAKESPEARE.

The large Schola Magna Australis in the Examination Schools at Oxford was crowded on February 3, with an audience of both sexes to hear a lecture by Mr. Arthur Bourchier, M. A., Christ Church,

on "Reflections on the Drama—and Shakespeare." Not since, about a quarter of a century ago, Sir Henry Irving delivered, on the same spot, his lecture on four of the great English actors as the University of Oxford invited an actor to lecture before her; and the occasion was evidently welcomed by present members of the University, graduate and undergraduate, and their families.

The Chairman in introducing Mr. Bourchier, recalled the history of the first official recognition of the drama by the University in the foundation of the Oxford University Dramatic Society, which took place in the Vice-Chancellorship and with the approval of Dr. Jowett, and in which Mr. Bourchier played a leading part.

THE LECTURE.

Mr. Bourchier, who had evidently resolved not to confine himself to one particular feature of a large subject so much as to unbosom himself of a number of his ideas and feelings about the art he practises, began by remarking upon the way in which the strenuous life of modern days affects the drama by sending people to the theatre too tired to welcome more than amusement. The strenuous playgoer who devoted his chief energy to playgoing was in an ever dwindling mindrity.

The lecturer then passed on to the history of the drama : its origin in religious inspiration, which expressed itself by means of the dance ; the growth of the dance in Greece into pantomime, the growth of the pantomime into drama through the coming of the actor as distinct from the chorus, and the development of the platform stage. From Greece he passed to Western Europe, showing how religion again had been responsible for the earliest drama, the miracle-plays, and tracing the gradual divorce of the drama from religion, its sudden splendour in the Elizabethan period, its gradual decline, and the coming of a new kind of drama, the modern comedy, with the comparatively humble creations of Tom Robertson.

Passing from the history of the drama to Shakespeare, he called attention to a number of points—to the part played by language in summoning visions of scenes which the stage art of the time could not represent; to the number of characters in the play who seem to dread responsibility: to his fondness for drawing characters of men and women made evil by prosecution which perhaps found its counterpart to day in the excessive interference of "grandmotherly government" ; and to the disadvantages under which Shakespeare used to be played owing to the deficiencies of stage art and the behaviour of the audience many of whom used to be present on the stage.The English were not an artistic nation, and we had no standard in things dramatic. Nevertheless, the story of the advance made by music in recent years ought to be of good augury for the same advance in the drama, if the Englsh could be persuaded to take the drama seriously. There was hope of good results from the pageants and village plays of the day which brought people closely acquainted with the still too little understood and too much suspected art of acting ; and Oxford and Cambridge through their dramatic societies had certainly done their part.

Coming to the idea of a national theatre, Mr. Bourchier spoke of the need for expert professional management by an unimpeded director, the dangers of leaving too much to "the intelligent outsider," and of the intrusion of faddism. By a national theatre, properly conducted, play-

wrights would be encouraged, a sound tradition maintained, and the educational value of the drama increased. The lecture closed with a reference to Shakespeare as a practical man and to the value of his work to the practical man as a repository of truth.

Passages especially enjoyed by the audience were Mr. Bourchier's recitation of the "Seven Ages of Man" and his description of the Passion play at Ober-Ammergau; and we must not forget an unrehearsed effect in which, just after Mr. Bourchier had asked for a little more light, we were all nearly blinded by the photographer's flashlight.

THE PROBLEM OF SCALE IN HINDU MUSIC.

Mr. A. H. Fox Strangways who has been touring in the Madras Presidency, making researches in Hindu Music, discusses the Problem of Scale in the course of an article to the *Madras Mail* :

But to return to the *sruti* question. For one person who cares for the theory of the thing, there are nine, if not ninety-nine, who would like to understand the practice. And the real points of interest in connection with this are :—Do musicians really use them ? And, if so, what do they add to the general effect ? The answer to these questions would be, in a few words, something like this :—Not only Indians, but Europeans, in fact all the world, use quarter tones ; only that the Indian has systematised them, made them a matter of rule, while the European employs at will a slight sharpening or flattening in order to temper the harshness or season the insipidity of the mere tone. A European will now and then sharpen or flatten a particular note of a song in order to give it a specially brilliant or soft colouring, without thereby giving any impression of his singing out of tune ; and this falsity might be found on actual measurement to amount to a quarter tone. He would always employ this licence on a subsidiary rather than a salient note of the song. The Hindu does the same sort of thing, only with more method. He deliberately constructs certain scales to contain these brilliant (*dipta*) or soft (*mridu*) notes at special and rather subsidiary places—only one or two, not enough to upset the general tonality ; and there is no doubt that when the ear gets accustomed to them they have the intended effect. A parallel to this is the difference of standpoint in the matter of rythm. Our music employs a good deal of *tempo rubato* inside a firmly established that the Indian has systematised them, made rythm ; that is, we accelerate or retard the song at will, to gain emphasis or induce a climax. The Hindu never does this but he has a larger assortment of rythms from which to choose. Having chosen one he sticks to it ; and he obtains his climax by greater elaboration of drumming and by a cross rhythm often so intricate that an unaccustomed ear can give itself no account of his procedure.

This difference in the point of view is the result of the very differnt conception of a song in the East and West. If you ask a European to sing, you will get what you ask for, pobably exactly, or at most with a single note here or there altered from the rendering you know. If you ask an Indian for *Cheraravademira* or *Sarasa Samamukha* you will be able to say when he has finished that there were passages your recognised in it, but you would hardly be able to write down a dozen consecutive notes which two singers at different

times rendered in precisely the same way. A song is sung differently in Aryavarta and the Deccan, differently in Mysore and Madras, differently in Triplicane and Saidapet. Yet two or any number of singers in Triplicane would sufficiently agree upon a version to be able to sing it in unison.

The Indian has "moods" of time and tune, and the point with him is to "exhibit" these, exploiting the highways, exploring the recesses, expatiating on each characteristic according to his powers, until the mood as such speaks to his hearer with a conviction that a mere isolated sequence of notes, a mere phrase, could never have given. The European does not choose a mood, but invents a phrase. This he develops into a melody—much in the same way as Tennyson has told us that the "Charge of the Light Brigade" was evolved out of a phrase which struck his fancy, "Rode the six hundred." To this he gives a setting of harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and what not, according to his powers, "stages" it in fact, until the phrase lives in the memory of his hearer and speaks to him with a conviction that its mere notes alone could never have induced. The Indian's effort then is constantly to exhibit his chosen mood in a variety of phrases, to individualise it, to make it unmistakable ; and for this he requires a freer use of our twelve semitones than the trammels of harmony allow us, and the occasional use of quarter tones. The European's effort is to exhibit his chosen phrase in a variety of moods ; and as harmony, expressed or understood, is his chief means of compssing this end, he is limited for his melody to such notes as are capable of entering into simultaneous combination with others, and these happen to be few.

There is one more question which we have often been asked, and which is probably on the lips of the reader :—"But do you really like Indian music ?" And its counterpart :—"What do they think of ours ?" Well, we will reply by another question :—"Do you enjoy the conversation of an Indian, and does he enjoy yours ?" —And you will answer that the enjoyment is greater exacty in proportion to your advance in his language. So it is with the music. You do not begin to understand it till the scales and rhythms have been so drilled into you that you have got them by heart; and he will remain completely bewildered by your song until he has lived in that atmosphere of polyphony which you have drawn in with every breath, and has been trained in that school of harmony and counterpoint in which you, all unconsciously perhaps, are a graduate.

There is some talk every now and then of enriching Eastern tunes by the addition of European harmony, or of refreshing the jaded Western palate by the piquancies of Indian melody. May the day when this shall be done on a large scale and of set purpose be far distant! Such Anglo-Indian *bhat* would be music at its worst. Music at its best is the intimate expression of national conviction.

THE ENGLISH STAGE DECAYING

There are some remarks on the above subject in the February number of *T. P.'S Magazine*, by Mr. P. R. Vaile, the author of *Wake Up England.* 'I cannot conclude this article', he says ' without a few words on the English Stage, and in doing so I speak out as a child of nature, who has wandered far and wide in this

little world of ours, and who has seen nature and acting in many lands. So that, when I come to pass judgment on the great men of the greatest city of the greatest empire of—this little dot of ours swimming in its tiny insignificance millions of miles from anything really big—I am not awed as I suppose I ought to be, for I am on the great foundation level, that is so markedly absent here.

And proceeding on the safe and firm foundation, I have little hesitation in saying that the stage as an educative influence in England is not. It simply does not exist. As a fine money-making game for some few shrewd actor-managers, who know how to cater for the falling taste of the people, by music-hallising their playhouses, it is still there, but in the main one does well to miss new productions in London now.

Why is it that in England the stage is decaying? It would perhaps to some seem bold to try to answer this. To me it is merely simple. We are so longer natural. We are poseurs. We are afraid of our premises. We think all the while of what others will think of us. We do not think for ourselves, only of the thing that is right and natural and proper.

As we are, so are our actors. They suffer from the national calamity of repression. The Englishman to day responds nobly, to genuine emotion, to patriotism, and to pride in deeds of heroic nature. Is there here no scope for our playwrights? Must we feebly endeavour to Frenchify or Americanise our stage because we will not be natural and use and cultivate the very qualities that put us where we now are in the forefront of nations? Shall we continue to lean more and more on other nations because we do not know what we want and have not strengh and intelligence enough to use the mine that lies at our feet?

French caricatures, American Cyclones it would be too shortrule cruel, to attempt to analyse the things that are now being used on the London Stage. There is no necessity to thrash the dead horse. When we have taken out French caricatures, American cyclones, Shakespearean parodies, and those circuses commonly called musical comedy, we are practically reduced to the feeble thing that is produced at the author's expense and run for (more or less) thirteen nights to paper houses. The modern play must be written up to an actor, manager and his wife, or it will not do. The other characters do not matter.

If things are in such a condition in this dear old land, the genuine British plays, smacking of the soil, it is time for England to consider the education of her children in the way that they should go.

But they are not! I am a confirmed optimist, and I feel sure that the time is not far distant, when it will be recognised that other things pay better than trash. This may be an ignoble reason for reform, but, it is an important fact.

THE INDIAN MUSIC JOURNAL

We are glad to hear that a new journal, devoted to Music is to be issued from April. The journal to be known as the Indian Music Journal will be issued every month and will consist of sixteen quarto pages in crown size. The contents will include among others the following: Translation of a Sanskrit treatise on Music; Indian Kritis rendered into the staff notation ; Articles on the History of Indian Music; Sketches of the lives of great musicians, etc. The subscrip-

tion is fixd at Rs. 6 per annum (including postage.) All communications should be addressed to the Manager, *The Indian Music*, Mysore. We wish the venture every success.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Amongst the many notable events which are to distinguish this year of the Coronation in England there must not be overlooked the great gathering of the leading musicians of the world, which will take place in London at the end of May. This will be the first International Musical Congress which has ever been held in the United Kingdom, though several have met on the Continent, the last being in Vienna in 1909. English musicians have been associated with the international musical movement, however, ever since the International Musical Society was formed eleven years ago, and England was paid a noteworthy compliment when at the close of the last Congress the wish was unanimously expressed that London might be the next meeting-place. British musicians are now engaged in raising funds for the entertainment of their guests as they wish to vie with the apparently lavish scale on which entertaining was organised in Vienna two years ago. This will be the fourth Congress of the Society. The first was held in Leipzig contemporaneously with the great Bach festival. Another took place at Basle four years ago and the last at Vienna synchronised with an interesting national event, the centenary of the death of Joseph Haydn. The most obvious result of the Society's work is of course the publication of magazines and papers on subjects connected with the science and art of music, but the dominant motive as it was expressed by Sir Alexander Makenzie the other day, is "to draw musicians and musical connoisseurs into closer individual contact, and to foster a wider knowledge and better understanding of the conditions and nature of the art of their respective countries; in fact, to establish that desirable friendly, and personal intercourse which was so valuable to progress." The organisation is at present entirely Western, but we see no reason why, with the spread of Western methods of music, it should not embrace Eastern communities also. In fact, the other day, Lord Redesdale was regretting that Japan had not joined the Society's work, seeing how very largely in that country European music had been adopted. The Society's scope might very well, we should think, be extended to Japan, and why not a little near home to India. Although the ancient Indian music still flourishes in the country, we have evidence every day of the appreciation of Indians of European music, and more direct association with European ideas and the means of progress which the West may discover would further stimulate a pursuit, which is already spreading in the country. This question might fittingly be considered at the London Congress.—

In those times people laughed when they were amused—now they only smile, except the lower classes. People might hiss then—not the ruffianly booing in the gallery on a first night now, but good honest sibilation, nearly always merited.

A stage embrace, unless it is natural, is ridiculous. I speak, of course, of Amateurs as Amateurs. Jones who is "Rome never forget. he is "Jones". He holds "Juliet" at an angle and dabs her cheek—all for the want of practice.

THE CHARMS OF HINDU MUSIC

Satyabala Devi's Lecture.

Satyabala Devi, the famous Hindu Musician of India, who is a young Brahmin lady of a noble family from Bengal gave on the 15th February an illustrated lecture on Hindu Music in the Carnegie Hall, at New York, U. S. A., before a crowded meeting of the leading musicians of America.

The chair was occupied by Dr. C. A. Wheeler, a leading New York Physician who takes great interest in the treatment of diseases by music.

Satyabala Devi said :—

The Indian at various periods of history, has substantially helped all the nations of the world in the acquisition of all that is good and great in humanity, particularly in arts, science and religion. To-day I am concerned with but one of these sciences, namely Hindu Music as played on the Vina. The Vina is the oldest musical instrument known to humanity. The Vina in Sanskrit means the voice, apparatus or larynx, and the instrument was so called because it was constructed with the idea of imitating the human voice and expressions, and which the instrument actually does, as you will see from the music I now play before you on the Vina.

Here Satyabala Devi played a composition in Ragini Deepaka by Gopal Naik, a contemporary of Akbar.

When the music stopped, the generous American audience, gave an outburst of applause such as a Caruso or a Padareweski could receive.

Satyabala Devi continuing, said :—The Ragini Deepaka I played before you today is not finished. The construction of the Ragini is such, that I could play variations upon its scale through time and eternity, and I would each time produce a new combination of notes in the same scale. This is the genius of Hindu Music, and no wonder Hindus believe that their music is divine, descended from Gods. The Vina is said to be the favourite musical instrument of God Mahadeo. Goddess Sarasvati plays on it, in those superterrestrial regions where the immortal Gods of India ever exist. On earth it has been played by Bharat, Hanuman, Narad—all of them, our great historical sages and characters. A considerable difficulty is found in setting to musical notation the Ragas and Raginis of Hindustan, as our system does not supply notes or signs, sufficiently expressive of the almost imperceptible elevation and depressions of the voice in these melodies, of which the timing is most difficult and the modulations frequent and very wild. Such Tals or timings as Brahma Tal or Lachmi Tal are known to Hindoos only. Even European Professors of music here in America tried to set to notation Ragini Malar, as is played by me on Vina, and they gave up the attempt in despair. Why ? Because you can put letters to notation, but you can never put expressions and life to notation. The Vina music has life, and I believe my Vina is as much as I am. Sometimes on a cloudy day I feel depressed, and take up my Vina for amusement. What happens ? The instrument positively refuses to play cheerful melodies as Kallian or Kaffi but will express correctly Durbari, Kanada or Asavari. A music like this is most difficult to learn or propagate. Everything that is good and great is difficult of acquisition. Whatever, magic was in the touch, when Orpheus swept his Lyre or Timo-

theus filled his softly breathing flute, the effects produced by Hindu music are even more extraordinary than any of these described in the music of the Ancient Greek or Roman Gods. The very fact that not one of the European Universities can reproduce a single melody that Minerva played, goes to show that the music died because it was not found worth propagating or that it was too difficult to be transmitted to a progeny that had no ears for music. Any nation that is deprived of generosity—kindness, sympathy and love, will never develop the divinity of music. Music in such a nation will die out, and its place will be taken by noise that horrible noise which cannot touch the senses but the Soul. None of our divine musicians ever played music to gratify the senses. They always played and touched the soul. How can you expect a mathematician who is trying to bring down music to a level of cool calculation preserve its quality as a soul-touching media ? And that to me seems to be the fate of all modern music. People in America want new music every day. They will breathe the same air every day, will drink water, milk and honey all throughout their life without change. The food for the body is same throughout the whole life time. And yet, music, the food for soul must change. No good stuff need ever change unless you replace the good wholesome cow's milk with artificial milk made of oil and lime water. Our music has never changed since it appeared, because we Hindus believe and feel that our soul is immortal, and our music has also got to be immortal it being an attitude of soul and emanation from divinity. Music intended for senses must always change, for senses are perishable. Shabda Brama (Eternal World) his unchangeable. European Music will go on changing till automatic pianos will sing, and the art of singing and playing, by human beings will disappear, and be replaced by singing machines of all kinds. God help the future of music. In America and Europe, your best musicians die unknown. Your best music is consigned to oblivion. If one has no money to advertise himself as a genius, there is no chance for him but to die unknown and unheard of in this civilized country of yours.

Mian Tanson, a wonderful musician in the time of the Great Moghul Emperor Akbar, the music of whose time I just played before you, sung one of the night Ragas at mid-day; the powers of his music were such, they say, that it instantly became night; and the darkness extended in a circle round the palace of Emperor Akbar, as far as the sound of his voice could be heard.

The effect of the Ragini Megh-Malar is said to be to produce rain. One of my Bengali sisters in days gone by, is reported by exerting the power of her voice in the Ragini to have drawn down from the clouds timely and refreshing showers on the parched rice crops of Bengal, and thereby averted the horrors of famine from that paradise of regions, for such my Bengal really is. I believe in the divine powers of Hindu Music, which means: in the beginning was the word—and the word was with God.

Mr. Francis Fawkes in a letter to Sir William Jones describes an Hindu instrument called Bin or Vina. "The style" he says "on this instrument is in general that of great execution. The music consists of a number of detached passages, some very regular in their ascent and

descent ; and those that are played softly, are both uncommon and pleasing. The open wires are struck from time to time in a manner that I think prepares the ear for a change in the modulation to which the uncommonly full and fine tones of these notes greatly contribute. The supposition that the Hindu Music has at some period been much superior to the present practice—the style, scale and authority of this instrument would greatly confirm the supposition."

From my personal experience I entirely agree with what this good and great Englishman says, for this gentleman has the courage to speak truth as he believes it to be.

Hindu music has indeed been great and so long as Vina exists in Hindustan no one dare dispute this fact. I do not know of any European instrument that can execute the same expressions as Vina does. It was perfect when it was first conceived, for what conception of a musical instrument higher than that it should imitate human voice. Vina is perfect even now, for humanity in this advanced 20th century knows of no better instrument and I do not think in the future a better and a higher conception of musical instrument will ever be developed. The highest conception of a musical instrument will always remain the same—the imitation of the human voice and expressions.

There is an excavation at Mahabalipatam described by Mr. Goldingham in the Asiatic Researches. It is a peice of sculpture representing Krishna attending the herd of Nanda. One of the group represents a man diverting an infant by playing on a Vina.

I now draw your attention to the place music occupied in our social and religious life as a gift of our Gods. In ancient India music was used for two purposes, *viz.*, worship of the divinty and curing of human ailments. I shall now play before you our religious music. This is the Oldest Sam-Veda music. We are a religious nation. We are a God-fearing, peaceful people. And I know this music I have set on phonograph discs for the benefit of my countrymen, which will help every man and woman in my country to learn this beautiful music of Sam-Veda.

Here Satyabala Devi sang to music, with Vina accompaniment a verse from the Sam-Veda. European ears had never heard the murmur of that great fountain of religious music of which Gregorian Chants are but a poor imitation. The audience heard this music with closed eyes, and at the end all said "Amen" and honored its religious character. The audience was in a prayerful mood. It was the first music that humanity had sung and the audience felt the influence of the hoary antiquity.

Satyabala Devi continuing, said in addition to the religious function of our music, its use for curative purposes in various diseases was an acknowledged fact.

All Sanskrit text-books of music which I have studied including Sangit Ratnakar, Sangit Sar, Sangit Parjat and Sangit Damodar have reference to the curative power the various scales and melodies possess in different ailments. European physicians are now struggling to find out, if music could be used as a therapeutic agent. We knew it thousands of years ago and what is more, we are practising the same to-day. It is getting late (cries of "go on").

Salyabala Devi concluded by thanking the audience and finished her lecture by singing a Bengali song.

Dr. Wheeler, the President, then said:-

India is a land of mystery and wonders. Missionaries often report to us that Hindus are heathens. I wish that I was born in that land of heathens, that gave religion and music to the world. This young Brahmin lady of 29—could she be human? How could she remember so many pieces of this most difficult music? The best of our musicians fail to reproduce from memory. The best of our European music divested of its embellishment of harmony would be very poor. For years I have been preaching that music can cure neurosthoenia, sleeplessness, hypochondriasis, hysteria, and even headaches. I had a headache when I took the chair. It is gone now. The music of Satyabala Devi has cured it. I am going to recommend all my patients to use the phonograph discs of Raj Deepaka as a curative agent. It is proposed by Mrs. Kingsford that a collection should be taken and the money given to Satyabala Devi. It is her wish to spend the money in preparing phonograph discs which discs she will send to India. The money realized by the sale of these discs she will invest in publishing as much of her research work in music as she can by the photo-printing method. I have no doubt, that her countrymen in India will appreciate the noble work, this brave young lady has undertaken, to preserve the fine art, which will be not only a discovery for India but for the whole music-loving world. Our Universities give Degrees in music, but the best of our professors know nothing about the lost history of music.

We, Americans and Europeans, often visit India. We bring bring back with us all sorts of beads, pictures, old fossils, pebbles, copper Gods and Curios, but we know absolutely nothing about the fine arts of the orient. I think we are superficial and cannot dive deep in the mysteries of India and Egypt. I propose a vote of thanks to our young lady friend Satyabala Devi of Bengal, for the most scholarly entertainment she has given us to night and I earnestly hope that we shall see good deal more of her in New York, Philadelphia and Boston. Whatever our other faults are, we are not narrow minded. Make us see goodness and greatness in anything, and we accept the truth. Those that do not see day light in Europe come here. America gives them field to develop and flourish. Europe afterwards knows that they are great and a Caruso or a Padarewski comes to the light of the world through America. A few years ago a poor starving Hindu monk came here. We acknowledged his worth at the world's fair at Chicago, and the whole world, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, hears of a great disciple Swami Vivekanand of a great Guru, Ramakrishna of Bengal. Satyabala Devi comes here, and yet probably her own countrymen know not her worth, or else how could people in India spare her to be here just as Italy knew nothing that it had a Caruso, till he came to America, perhaps India knows nothing that it possesses a Satyabala Devi. I wish her success in her brave and scholarly undertaking.

Dr. Wheeler then announced that the collection amounted to 169 Clants. There was a ring in the collection. The collection was handed to Satyabala Devi among loud cheers.

Satyabala Devi expressed her gratitude to the good and generous American people, and the meeting dispersed.

Dr. COOMARASAWMI ON INDIAN SCULPTURE

They had no remains of sculpture which they could take farther back than two or three centuries R. C., at which time the decorative art of the *stapas* or topes came into vogue illustrative of the life and character of the times. Then a strong wave of Western influence followed, and brought in its advent the art of the Christian and the Persian schools. As the result of this combination they had in the North-Western Provinces of India architectural representations of Buddha, Bodhisatvas and others, produced in a mixture of Eastern and Western methods. After leaving the Amrawati and Sanchi remains, they came to what was known as the Gupta school. It was a period of development. Much of the charming and admirable work of that school was to be found near Benares and at other places in the north of India. There was originality of conception and greatness of expression, until they reached the period of Brahmanical revival. At that time India was the dynamic centre of Eastern arts and industries. Its conquests extended up to Java, where the past remains of India's greatness were to be seen sculptured on a very extensive scale. The revival of Hinduism due to the teachings of Shankaracharia produced works of art of the Shivite characters, such as the Vihara scenes of Shiva, Parvati, Kailas, Indra and the Ghandharva hymnologists. The iconoclastic tendencies of the Mahomedan conquerors broke many of the existing sculptures: they prevented their onward progress: although it must be admitted that they compensated for this destructivenes later by means of introducing miniature, painting other portraiture, and similar arts. At Tanjore, Madras and Jaipur sculpture was still a living art. It had not died out in India as was erroneously asserted sometimes. The art was there; it had not declined. The only thing was that nowadays people did not want it.

DRAMATIC NEWS

THE SUGUNA VILASA SABHA

Vidhileka Vaidyudu, an adaptation in Telugu of Moliere's *Physician in spite of himself*, by Mr. V. Venkatachala Aiyya, March 5th, 1911.

This successful adaptation of Moliere's great comedy, of which we gave an account in our last issue, was repeated by the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* in the Victoria Public Hall, on Sunday the 5th March. An improvement was noticed in several directions, especially in the arrangement of a greater variety of musical tunes. The elopement scene of Lingamanaya and Lakkamma was managed with greater ability by Messrs. Balasundaram and Vadivelu. A single alteration in the cast of characters was done, not with any good results.

THE MADRAS EXCELSIOR CLUB

The Demon Land, by Mr. P. Sambandam, B.A., B. L. was staged with success by the members of the above club, on Saturday, the 18th March, under the Presidentship of the Hon. Mr. P. Theagaraya Chetti. The club must be congratulated on the ability displayed by their hero Rajasimha.

THE STAGE LOVER

We hear that a new Journal devoted to the Stage is to be started in Madras from this month. It is to be an Anglo-Tamil illustrated monthly of the name of *The Stage Lover* consisting of 24 pages of reading matter. For further particulars the readers are referred to the Manager of *The Stage Lover*, Madras, E.